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Carlucci heads list of NSC candidates

By Jeremiah O'Leary
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Frank Carlucci, the former deputy secretary of defense in the Reagan administration and the deputy director of the CIA in the Carter administration, has emerged as the front-runner to succeed Vice Adm. John Poindexter as the president's national security adviser, it was learned by The Washington Times.

An announcement of the successor might be made as early as this morning, when President Reagan meets with top officials at the White House. The president returned last night from a brief Thanksgiving break at his California ranch to a capital rife with rumor, speculation and intrigue.

The search for Adm. Poindexter's replacement has narrowed to a so-called "short list," including the names of David M. Abshire, 60, who is completing a three-year tour as U.S. ambassador to NATO, and Wil-

liam G. Hyland and Bobby Inman, both of whom were former deputy directors of the CIA.

Mr. Carlucci is said to have the support of Secretary of State George Shultz, Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger and CIA Director William J. Casey. Mr. Hyland is understood to be the favorite of Donald Regan, the White House chief of staff.

Though several people talked to Mr. Carlucci over the weekend about his availability, the job has not been tendered by the president. "This is not a job you accept with one telephone call," Mr. Carlucci said last night. "There must be a clear understanding of what the charter is all about."

The strengths that make him attractive as a compromise choice are said to be his ability to work as "a civil servant in the British mold, who can work with a Democratic or Republican administration with equal effectiveness."

Mr. Carlucci, who was deputy secretary of defense in the first two years of the Reagan administration,

has had a long career in government. He was chairman of Sears World Trade Inc., which recently was dissolved. He still operates his own consulting firm, International Planning Analysis Center, which reports \$4.5 million in annual sales.

Adm. Poindexter, the man he would replace, resigned last week after it was disclosed that profits from U.S. arms sales to Iran were diverted to Nicaragua's anti-Marxist rebels, or Contras.

The growing furor over the Iranian arms sales and Nicaraguan rebel funding led to the firing of Lt. Col. Oliver North, 43, the aide to Adm. Poindexter who is believed to have engineered the plan to divert money from Iran to the Contras during a period when Congress would not authorize aid to the rebels.

Congress has since approved \$100 million in aid to the Nicaraguan resistance.

Navy Secretary John Lehman, former United Nations Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick and retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft also figured in the speculation over who would succeed Mr. Poindexter, but are now believed to be out of the running.

The replacement for Adm. Poindexter is expected to insist on a strong mandate for taking charge of the 46-member NSC staff in light of the apparent pervasive influence of White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan, who is himself the subject of rumors that his job is in jeopardy.

Mr. Regan says he knew nothing of the arms-to-Iran, cash-to-the-Contras scheme, and likened himself to a bank president who should not be held accountable for mistakes by "bank tellers," presumably Adm. Poindexter and Col. North.

Some NSC aides are bitter over what they describe as "constant interference" by Mr. Regan and his hand-picked lieutenants in national security matters.

Former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane, one of the architects of initial arms sales to Iran in mid-1985, resigned last December after a series of disagreements with Mr. Regan.

Adm. Poindexter also operated in the shadow of Mr. Regan, who is considered the most powerful White House chief of staff since the late Sherman Adams in the Eisenhower administration.

Mr. Carlucci is a Princeton graduate, Korean War naval gunnery officer and former foreign service officer. In 1960, he was the victim of a stabbing in the Congo (now Zaire) when he rescued a carload of Americans from a mob. He served in Zanzibar and as political officer of the U.S. Embassy in Brazil. Mr. Carlucci later became director of the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1971.

The following year he became deputy director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, then run by Mr. Weinberger. In 1973, he was named Undersecretary of Health, Education and Welfare, where he helped carry out the so-called New Federalism plan to give states and localities greater control over social programs.

President Gerald Ford named him ambassador to Portugal in 1974 and he is credited with helping to

save Portugal from a communist takeover at a time when Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had written off the country and had opposed further aid to Portugal's Socialist government.

Mr. Carlucci, working closely with Helmut Schmidt, then chancellor of West Germany, helped arrange desperately needed financing for Portugal's Social Democratic Party, which finally prevailed against the Communists.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter named Mr. Carlucci deputy CIA director under Stansfield Turner. After Mr. Reagan was elected in 1980, Mr. Weinberger refused to serve as secretary of defense unless he could have Mr. Carlucci as deputy secretary. Mr. Carlucci was strongly opposed by conservatives in the new administration and in Congress. But he got the job and worked with Mr. Weinberger until 1982, when he left to join Sears World Trade.